

Policy Statement

Sept 2018

Conflict Resolution at Hope Vineyard Church

It is important that church members have the confidence that there is a process in place to address potential problems whether real or perceived.

1. Talk to the person who you have an issue with
2. Talk to your home group leader or a ministry leader
3. Talk to a Hope Vineyard Pastor
4. Talk to a Hope Vineyard Board member

Dealing with Conflict

Conflict is inevitable – the clash of opinions, values, beliefs, even desires will happen when people are thrown together as they forge a new community.

Learning to discuss and resolve conflict in a healthy way will bring incredible reward to your relationships and by virtue to the church as a whole. We will become;

stronger, more mature

people with greater understanding of each other, and of how to deal with conflict

people with greater faith that conflict can be resolved

As followers of Jesus our goal is not to avoid conflict, but rather to discuss the issue not the person, approach all conversations with courage, honesty and integrity, bringing to the table the values of Hope Vineyard. We note;

conflict avoidance is just denial of issues and problems

the goal is to learn how to fight fair

To do this there are keys which guide our behaviour, our inner thoughts and feelings and these ultimately guide our outcomes. When a problem occurs the keys are;

1. Be proactive by talking directly to the person rather than to others. People have problems with people, not groups, and gossip or collaboration with others is harmful to you, others and the church as a whole.
2. Fight fair and talk in specifics without involving hearsay, the issue is about a behaviour, an ideology or forging a better way forward for the benefit of others.
3. Believe the best of the other, as you would want others to do for you and do this by filling in blanks or silences positively.
4. Do not reject the person in your heart as this will present in your behaviour as personal attacks and will allow you to fill in the blanks with negatives which may be perceived rather than real.

5. Do not undermine the person, and when talking with others be gracious as if the person were standing alongside you.
6. Know yourself. This will help you to not respond when you are emotionally compromised which you could do through speaking ill or in writing texts/emails. Push pause and take it up when you have calmed, or ask the other to push pause and revisit it with you later.
7. Do not let things simmer, this creates a foothold for Satan to use to undermine you, others through you or the work of the church. Just remember;
 - a. It's easy to think the issue is not big enough to bother about sorting out. Be braver than this.
 - b. If it bothers you – it is an issue that needs dealing with and others will understand.
 - c. If you don't deal with it, it will build up into something unconstructive and even destructive
8. Don't let things go unresolved
 - a. When the heat is off it can seem unhelpful to bring up the situation that produced the heat
 - b. An unresolved issue never goes away
 - c. Think about how to bring these up and deal with them
 - d. If unsure if there are issues – ask “Are we OK with each other?”
 - a. Don't use verbal, emotional, physical or emotional abuse. Examples of this would be; swearing, throwing things, slamming doors or even making others feel guilty, stupid, rejected.

Some Helpful Tools

1. Learn non-threatening language
 - a. Ask questions
 - b. Use phrases such as “Help me to understand”, “Can I push back on that a little bit?”, “Can we get on the solution side of the problem?”
2. Choose your battles
 - a. Most things are not worth fighting for
 - b. Score it on 1-10
3. Seek first to understand – then to be understood
4. Play fair with talking time, either by pausing yourself or charging others to allow you to speak
5. Stop and think
 - a. Take as long as you need
 - b. Buy time if you need to

Leading Groups

If you get a heckler

1. Ask to put the issue on hold till the meeting is finished
2. If they won't
 - a. Ask someone to take over & deal with it in another room -or
 - b. It may be a good opportunity to model dealing with conflict
 - c. If they won't – close the meeting and ask everyone to leave

1. Understand your level of authority
 - a. You can always pass it up the chain
2. Realise they are not the problem
 - a. The problem is the problem
 - b. Work on the problem together
3. Find out what they want
4. Understand your non-negotiables
5. Don't criticise the person
 - a. Focus on the problem
6. Realise that raising your voice is unhelpful and it will cause defensiveness

Our Guiding Principle

Do everything with a heart of love

- What is the best for this person?
- be prepared to make sacrifices

James 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.